

## 2nd Annual Border Security Conference enhances UTEP as 'center of excellence' New technology spurs border trade, commerce

As one of the leading border experts on Capitol Hill, Congressman Reyes led the 2nd Annual Border Security Conference, hosted by UTEP this past August.

Over 400 conferees heard from more than 20 experts on the theme "Border Security: Critical Technologies for Security and Trade." Reyes also spoke about the Secure Borders Act, legislation he introduced in Congress that would enhance security and promote economic prosperity

in the border region.

Keynote speakers were Congressman Bennie Thompson, Ranking Member of the House Committee on Homeland Security, and Gen. Michael Hayden, Deputy Director of National Intelligence.

Several major technology companies featured exhibits.

"This event adds to UTEP's growing image as a 'center for excellence' on border security issues," Reyes said.



**BORDER SECURITY CONFERENCE** General Michael Hayden, Deputy Director of National Intelligence, UTEP President Diana Natalicio and Congressman Reyes discuss border strategies at the conference at UTEP in August.

## CONGRESSMAN SILVESTRE REYES REPORTS

FROM WASHINGTON, D.C.

16<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, Texas

2433 Rayburn House Office Building

Winter 2005-2006

## Tempo of Fort Bliss expansion picks up Army planners coordinating relocation timetables with other posts

The tempo of change is picking up dramatically at Fort Bliss as the base moves closer to welcoming new troops and families who will be re-stationed there due to the recent Base Realignment and Closure decision.

Congressman Silvestre Reyes led community leaders in meetings held in Washington, D.C. in October with corporate, military and government officials connected with the ongoing expansion of Fort Bliss.

With 20,000 troops poised to relocate to Fort Bliss, Army planners are also busily coordinating troop movements with other posts.

The El Paso delegation met with high-ranking military and defense industry leaders at the Annual Association of the United States Army conference. Their meeting focused on transportation infrastructure, economic development and improved border security.

Future changes were also discussed with the Department of Defense's Office of Economic Adjustment, which works to identify government programs to help communities accommodate incoming troops and families.



**BRAC CHANGES 'SKYLINE'** Modernizing Fort Bliss water system for the influx of new troops meant replacement this August of a 64-year-old, 500,000-gallon water storage tank (foreground) with a new \$1.2 Million, 750,000-gallon tank.

### Fort Bliss/White Sands gear for new projects

\*\$134 Million for procurement/construction of temporary buildings at Biggs Army Airfield.

\*\$47 Million for new roads, water and sewer lines and electricity infrastructure for Biggs Army Airfield.

\*\$33 Million for electromagnetic vulnerability assessment facility at White Sands Missile Range.

\*\$31 Million for housing at White Sands Missile Range.

\*\$22 Million for new barracks at Fort Bliss for soldiers deploying to Iraq/Afghanistan.

\*\$10 Million for additional impact aid funding for local school districts due to arrival of new troops and families at Fort Bliss. (pending)

\*\$5 Million for new vehicle bridge between Fort Bliss and Biggs Army Airfield.

\*\$3.5 Million to continue El Paso Public Utilities/Fort Bliss desalination project.

### Improving literacy and reading in El Paso

In addition to promoting federal education initiatives and funding in Congress, Congressman Reyes has joined with other local leaders in El Paso to promote literacy and education within the community.

Reyes has worked with the El Paso Empowerment Zone, Gem's Gems, Fort Bliss and the El Paso Public Libraries on the ongoing "Read El Paso Read" program, which has identified federal programs that can help improve literacy skills and encourage children to read.

### 'Benefit Bank' accesses tax credits for needy

This winter, El Paso families will gain access to a program that will deliver federal dollars to El Pasoans in need and could eventually generate over \$1 Billion a year for Texans.

Congressman Reyes introduced the Benefit Bank to *Centro de Salud Familiar La Fe*, UTEP and other El Paso organizations in August to help connect eligible El Pasoans with tax credits via local volunteers using online applications to file taxes and benefit applications. A pilot Benefit Bank program begins in early 2006.

## Of Note...

UTEP was awarded \$484,816 in September by the Department of Health and Human Services for the community based research project "Can Promotoras Change Clinical Outcomes for Chronic Diseases in El Paso." This program uses community health workers to identify and suggest possible solutions to local health concerns. The County of El Paso was awarded \$400,000 for the 65<sup>th</sup> Family District Court in September by the Department of Health and Human Services to provide alcohol and drug treatment, and services to support treatment, including assessment, case management and program coordination for those in need of treatment drug court services.

The UTEP/University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center Advanced Research Cooperation in Environmental Health Program on Border Asthma was awarded \$1,025,385 in September by the Department of Health and Human Services.

Project ParaProfessional (PARA) was awarded \$199,998 by the Department of Education in September to help address the shortage and enhance the quality of special education personnel in West Texas.

El Paso Center for Children, Inc., was awarded \$153,523 in September by the Department of Health and Human Services to serve runaway and homeless youth.

El Paso Community College (EPCC) was awarded \$101,885 in September by the Department of Education for EPCC's Childcare Program, which provides on-campus and off-campus childcare for EPCC students.



**SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS** at the recent Labor Day Breakfast in El Paso, Congressman Reyes congratulates this year's El Paso Central Labor Union scholarship winners. Reyes also presented David Jones, a longtime labor activist, with a congressional certificate recognizing his hard work on behalf of El Paso workers.

## PTSD, new troops at Fort Bliss dominate discussion at 2005 Veteran Town Hall

Congressman Reyes' 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Veterans Town Hall, which was broadcast on El Paso's cable access channel 15 on November 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, focused on timely topics facing El Paso's veteran and retired military community.

Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary James Nicholson was the featured guest, and was joined by veteran advocates and regional and local officials on two 90-minute panels.

Questions were solicited from local veterans and military retirees on new developments affecting Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, the new VA budget, the influx of troops to Fort Bliss and anticipated effects on William Beaumont Army Medical Center and the El Paso VA Healthcare System.

Secretary Nicholson followed Anthony Principi as the second secretary to appear at the El Paso forum.



**WORLD DIABETES DAY** - Congressman Reyes met with students at Mesita Elementary School to discuss federal efforts to prevent diabetes through exercise and healthy eating. Members of the UTEP football team also participated.

## Preparations for potential flu pandemic States urged to develop 'contingency plans'

Congressman Reyes is a cosponsor of a bill that would create a comprehensive plan to detect, prepare for and combat a flu pandemic. The legislation would provide resources to ensure an adequate and accessible supply of vaccines, expand state preparedness activities, and improve international coordination and efforts.

Not only must we prepare for an influenza pandemic, a deadly strain of the "bird flu" is spreading in bird populations from Asia to

Europe, and there is a fear that the disease could spread in humans.

"El Pasoans should take the threat of a possible human pandemic of 'bird flu' seriously," Reyes warned, as border residents know more than others that diseases are not confined by international boundaries.

According to the Center for Disease Control, "bird flu" is an infection caused by avian (bird) influenza (flu) viruses that occur naturally among birds.

**WATCH CONGRESS ON THE BORDER, CH. 15, WEDNESDAY AT 6:30 P.M.**

## \$50,000 grant aids Big Brothers Big Sisters with youth issues

A \$50,000 grant was awarded to Big Brothers Big Sisters of El Paso by the Department of Health and Human Services.

The grant was obtained this October and was part of a \$400,000 package of grants awarded to several El Paso community organizations.

Congressman Reyes' El Paso office is also assisting Big Brothers Big Sisters in working with El Paso's state legislative delegation for better access to grants. Big Brothers Big Sisters of El Paso is Texas' fastest growing chapter and currently helps more than 1,200 youths with academic achievement, gang prevention and reducing substance abuse.

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